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EAST TIMOR RECONSTRUCTION

Over 50 countries and international agencies have recently gathered in Tokyo to pledge US$520 million in grant funding over the next three years to rebuild East Timor and to ensure its smooth transition to future independence. A significant part of the territory's infrastructure was destroyed when widespread violence erupted following an United Nations-sponsored referendum vote on the future status of East Timor last August. The United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, has been the lead agency in the efforts for the reconstruction of East Timor. In this edition of **World Chronicle**, J. Victor Angelo, UNDP's Special Envoy for East Timor, talks about what has been done to improve the lives of the Timorese population.

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ANNOUNCER: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **World Chronicle**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues.

Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **World Chronicle**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns, and this is **World Chronicle**.

Recently, 29 nations committed $522 million over three years to the reconstruction of East Timor. A large part of the territory's infrastructure was destroyed when widespread violence erupted following the referendum vote for independence last August. Initial plans to link emergency aid with sustainable, long-term development in East Timor include an education and training programme, as well as support for small and micro enterprises. Income generating opportunities will be a key concern.

UNDP, the United Nations Development Programme, has appointed a Special Envoy for East Timor to ensure a coordinated and rapid response in order to deal with the country's most pressing needs. He is J. Victor Angelo who had previously served as UNDP's Deputy Assistant Administrator. Joining me to talk to Mr. Angelo are Betsy Pisik of *The Washington Times* and Argemiro Ferreira of *Tribuna da Imprensa*.

Mr. Angelo, welcome to **World Chronicle.**

Mr. Angelo, everyone was pretty horrified by the events that followed the referendum for independence in East Timor ending a long period of quarrelling over its status. Indonesia had tried to grab it off. How is the situation now? Is it still pretty much of a mess or are things beginning to assume some kind of semblance of normalcy?

ANGELO: People are going back to a more normal life gradually. You see markets opening, things being traded. It's when it comes to the rehabilitation of infrastructure and to economic revival that things are very much at the same stage they were at the beginning meaning that work has yet to start.

LITTLEJOHNS: You speak about the infrastructure, how much progress has been made, course you have only had a few months.

ANGELO: That's right, yes.

LITTLEJOHNS: How much progress has been made to restore the infrastructure?

ANGELO: On the road side, for instance, we have been able to initiate a programme to repair roads particularly those mountainous roads that are vital to link the communities with the urban centres. And they are vital because they are needed to bring in the humanitarian goods and to bring out the agricultural produce that the communities are

able to produce at this stage. So the road repair programme has started and UNDP has four brigades at this stage working on it. We have about 100 people, led by four national engineers -- roads engineers. The other infrastructure we are about to start - the repairs of the water systems, including the water systems in some of the smallest towns not just in the capital city or in the second city Kupang but also in smaller places.

LITTLEJOHNS: What about electricity -- is there .....

ANGELO: The electricity is also -- we have just finalized what could be our detailed programme for the next twelve months to rehabilitate the power supply and we will be doing that throughout the country with the assistance of a major donor.

LITTLEJOHNS: So life is still rather primitive?

ANGELO: Life is still very, very difficult at this stage. I would say yes. And people have a lot of expectations. Their expectations are extremely high and we have, on the international side to respond to these expectations very quickly and make sure at least the basic repairs to the infrastructure are done without any further delay.

PISIK: We get the impression from looking at the news here that most of the province was levelled, looted, burned, levelled so in a sense you have the opportunity to build a society from the ground up in a sense. How are you going to do that in terms of your priorities? You mentioned roads and infrastructure, water and electricity what other bedrock priorities do you have and how important is it to do all that before you can finish bringing people back to their homes? Repatriated.

ANGELO: Certainly the infrastructure, the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the infrastructure is a priority as it is the expansion of the infrastructure because some of the infrastructure that was there before the crisis was no longer enough to respond to the human needs of the population. But besides that, one of the most important priorities is to be able to build up a civil administration for the country. We have to keep in mind that before the referendum, this was a province of another country with a provincial administration. Now we have to build a state administration for a country that is going to be independent soon therefore public service training, capacity building in that area, is one of the most important priorities. Another important priority is to make sure that people can have access to income-producing activities because for the time being one of the major and most critical problems is that most of the population, particularly in the urban areas, is jobless. There is no employment available and we have to make sure that economic activities resume as soon as

possible. So that is an important area as well as it is important to create some kind of nation building in terms of making sure that East Timor and the East Timorese population belong to that country and feel part of a very cohesive society.

FERREIRA: Mr. Angelo, for some big powers, or at least for the United States -- I remember politicians like Senator Jesse Helms -- nation building is a kind of dirty word because of controversial situations like Somalia. Do you think some countries could have second thoughts according to developments there?

ANGELO: No, I don't think so. I think in the case of East Timor it's quite clear that the society has been very much disrupted in the past and therefore, different generations of that country have gone through different experiences. Take a very simple example like the language.. When you come to the older generations they speak Portuguese but when you come to the younger generation they speak Bahasa Indonesia, the language of Indonesia, or they speak some English and no Portuguese. And then again on the language side, there are several national languages. One of them is some kind of the market language that a lot of people speak, not everyone, which is ....

LITTLEJOHNS: A sort of dialect you mean?

ANGELO: Yes, a sort of dialect. And one has to bring all these elements together to make sure that at the end of the day there is a nation that makes sense and a nation that is as united as possible in a situation that in the past was based on division.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Angelo, you spoke about the problem of money, of unemployment. If people are not employed where do they get the wherewithal to live? How can they buy anything if they have no resources?

ANGELO: The situation for the local population is in many ways very close to desperation meaning there is very little money available in the families and therefore, if we do not have an approach that is labour-intensive in terms of rebuilding the country, in terms of promoting development, we will be soon confronted with social unrest because people have been in this situation now for several months since late August and September. It's now time for them to again have some kind of income. They have been extremely patient. They know that this was a transition that was necessary, they know that their country is moving in the right direction but there is a limit to the patience of people. And now that's why we say now we have to do things that employ as many people as possible, and particularly in the urban areas because that's where the problem is more acute.

PISIK: You have been going back to East Timor, you said about what three, four times in the last couple of months? I'm curious, how much resentment or anger is there towards the United Nations? When you say that this was a transition that was necessary it was not a peaceful and orderly transition. There are those who say that the UN really let these people down. Do they feel that way?

ANGELO: No, I don't think so. I know the people there pretty well. I have been to many places and I've talked to many people and they associate the UN to their own liberation and they associate the UN to the referendum that took place at the end of August. So in many ways the UN has a very positive image. Now this image can change very rapidly if we are not able to respond to the expectations, and as I said, the expectations are pretty high. People wanted a longer transition or a long transition under UN administration to make sure that we will be in a position to respond to some of the underdevelopment that was taking place there but we have not been able to mobilize the resources and do the things that the people want us to do and we have to do them in close association with them, in close dialogue with them.

FERREIRA: Mr. Angelo, about the amount of the money and the speed of action, delegates from tens of countries and international agencies met in Tokyo and I guess you were the coordinator of that meeting.

ANGELO: Yes.

FERREIRA: Is this panel enough to rebuild East Timor and to ensure its transition to independence and have you any special skills to keep the money flowing?

ANGELO: I think the word flowing is the right word because the money has been pledged and I would say that the response from Tokyo was a very generous one. But one thing is to pledge the resources and the other thing is to make them available. And now we have to make sure that the dialogue with the international community, with the donors, goes on for the money to become available as soon as possible. And that's the challenge ahead of us. And that's one of the things I have been engaged on the UNDP side to make sure money is made available right away for projects, for operations to start and we have to do that.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Angelo, you are the first, as far as I know, UNDP Special Envoy why was it thought necessary that in this situation in East Timor there was a need for a UNDP Special person?

ANGELO: We have a new Administrator since last year and he wants UNDP to

provide a more integrated and more coordinated response to these kinds of situations. And that's why he felt that it's quite important to appoint somebody at the CEO level that will bring the different windows of UNDP, the different parts of the house together and provide that kind of more integrated response to the crisis. And our experience so far has been that we have been able to respond to the challenge in East Timor in such a way that is considered by others as a positive response.

LITTLEJOHNS: So this could be a trend. I mean you could be the first of a whole bunch of Special Envoys in similar situations?

ANGELO: Maybe, yes. So far the experience has been positive so it might be the beginning of a trend.

PISIK: In essence your job sounds like it is in large part liaison with the donor countries and in a sense like a fundraiser for this activity. Of the 520 million that has been pledged do you have enough in the bank already to get started on what you need?

ANGELO: We have some money to start activities, yes, but we have to make more money available right away. So I would say, no, we don't have enough money in the bank to do what we would like to do at this stage and that's why one of the most urgent needs is to make sure that the money that has been promised is indeed disbursed and made available to the UN, to the different parts of the UN system, to the UN administration there, and also to the development side of it. And that's what we're trying to do nowadays.

PISIK: I know that the United States has just pledged about 70 million and that might even be on top of previously pledged money.

ANGELO: Yes.

PISIK: Is that money likely to show up sooner or later and also are there any particular conditions attached?

ANGELO: I don't know when the US money will be released. Honestly, I don't know. We say to the US, as we say to any other major donor, as far as East Timor is concerned we need the money as soon as possible. The UN administration is very thin on the ground. We have to strengthen it. We also have to do a lot of capacity development on the Timorese side. We have the reconstruction work that has just started and needs to be expanded very quickly. We have to make sure that we train the people, both in the public sector and in the private sector. We have to make sure that we support the creation of small enterprises. That we revive the agricultural production, including coffee. All these require

resources and expertise. So if the money is not available it will not be possible to do it or it would take longer and the longer it takes, the more difficult it becomes for the UN to have a serious impact in the transition.

LITTLEJOHNS: This is **World Chronicle**. Our guest is J. Victor Angelo, Special Envoy to East Timor of UNDP, the United Nations Development Programme.

Mr. Angelo, tell us about relations between your civilian operation and the UN peacekeeping operation in East Timor. Are relations good? Is there any conflict of interest or responsibility?

ANGELO: We have different but complementary mandates in the sense that the UN is the administration of the territory during this period up to independence. We relate to the UN administration as we relate to a government with the only difference that on the other side of the table we have our own colleagues. And we have to make sure at the end of the day, more than anywhere else in the world, that the UN fulfills its mission and has a very successful mission. So we keep very, very close contact with the colleagues in the UN administration. We make sure that whatever we do is fully coordinated by them and we follow their priorities because that's the way we relate with an administration.

FERREIRA: You speak Portuguese and Mr. Vieira de Mello speaks Portuguese.

ANGELO: That's right.

FERREIRA: And you're both from the United Nations staff, maybe from the '70s. I'd like to know, in spite of that -- the coordination of both tasks -- are these tasks well-defined?

ANGELO: The tasks are well-defined, no doubt. Our role is very much to support the UN administration when it comes to development, to capacity building of the Timorese, to help the UN administration to prepare the institutions and the people that will take over when independence comes in. So we work like development assistants to the UN administration. They are the administrators, we are the advisers. We are the experts in some of the areas and we are the assistants and it works well as we work well in many of the parts of the world with another government. I mean, it's above all a relationship of trust and if the trust is there it is possible to have a good relationship. And we also have to clear cut priorities. As in this case, the priorities are well-defined and we try to play our part in achieving those priorities.

PISIK: The UN civilian administration in Kosovo has been complaining

bitterly that they don't have enough money, enough resources, enough anything. Even the power is still not running there. Are you concerned that your area will be overtaken, overshadowed by the next emergency or that donor fatigue will set in before you have the chance to collect all that's coming your way?

ANGELO: Well, the pledges in the conference in Tokyo were very promising and we have to base ourselves on that ....

LITTLEJOHNS: This is where the pledges for 520 million ...

ANGELO: Exactly, yes. And we believe that the donors sooner or later will release that amount -- the 520-something million US dollars that have been pledged. If they do that, we will be able to achieve at least the most important objectives of the mission. Now, money is never enough and you have to do whatever you can do with the money that is available. If more money is available, I think, more things can be done but if that money that has been pledged at the donor conference is made available we can have a good transition and prepare the ground for an independent country to take over. I mean for the independent administration to take over and for them to take off in terms of development.

FERREIRA: Considering that there's supposed to be another meeting in Portugal I guess, do you anticipate changing the actions, or additional measures, new approaches, based on the achievements of each phase on the day-to-day problems you face?

ANGELO: By the time the next donors meeting takes place, and that will be in June, by that time most of the humanitarian work should have been completed. So the meeting will take stock of what has been done in the humanitarian area and we will start looking at the development side of things with a deeper eye. Now if money takes as long as it is taking nowadays to come in, we might go to the donors conference in June with a substantial part of the reconstruction work not yet done. So that's one of the things that the conference in Lisbon in June has to look at and see how we can accelerate that because we can't spend too much time on the construction, we have also to create the foundations for development the foundation for a sustainable economy and a sustainable society in East Timor. And that's certainly one of the most critical challenges that the territory will face is what kind of development, where are the foundations, what are the promising sectors, where the investments should be in these kind of things, and what kind of role for the state for instance in the economy.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Angelo, the Indonesians came in for a lot of criticism for

their role in the violence that followed the referendum. General Wiranto has suffered the consequences. What are the Indonesians doing now to help in the transition? Are they working well with the UN people included your team?

ANGELO: The Indonesia we have today is not the same that was there at the end of August or at the beginning of September and certainly there is a much stronger relationship today between the East Timorese and the Indonesians than at that time. I would say that the relationship between Timor and Indonesia is a positive one at this stage. It's growing. The President of Indonesia is visiting as you know. The CNRT President and the leaders of East Timor have also visited Jakarta in the recent past. So I believe that the stronger relationship between the two countries, will create the conditions for a different kind of relationship in the future and certainly for a relationship that is mutually beneficial.

LITTLEJOHNS: Tell me about Portugal -- you are Portuguese -- the former colonial power for East Timor. What is Portugal doing to help?

ANGELO: Well, I can't speak on behalf of Portugal but I can--

LITTLEJOHNS: No I didn't mean that but you have a little bit of knowledge.

ANGELO: Yes. And we are working very closely with them because they are not only providing money to the UN administration, to the trust fund of the UN administration, but they are also providing quite an amount of resources through UNDP. They are basically at this stage trying to do a number of things in the area of infrastructure. They are the key players for instance when it comes to power supply. They are important players with Australia when it comes to water. They are also playing an important role in terms of the port management. So infrastructure is one of the areas where they are playing an active role. They are also playing an active role in the area of education. That has been the request of the East Timorese. They want the Portuguese to be, well they say, the exclusive partner in that area but I don't think there is such a thing as exclusivity in the area of education. But certainly an important partner in the area of education. They are also an important partner in the area of public health. With us, with the UN Development Programme, we might be working with the Portuguese in the building of the public administration, of the civil service in East Timor.

LITTLEJOHNS: Which is practically non-existent at the moment.

ANGELO: Yes. There is no public service as such. There were a few people working in the previous provincial administration, very often in very low positions. Lower

echelons of the administration.

LITTLEJOHNS: That was the deliberate policy on the part of the Indonesians to keep them down?

ANGELO: That was the policy yes. That was the policy. Today we have to prepare the Timorese both those from inside and those that were living abroad to be the future managers of the public administration of that country.

PISIK: Looking ahead to sustainable development I'm wondering you had mentioned some of the promising sectors to concentrate on eventually. What do you suppose those would be in terms of investment perhaps?

ANGELO: It's a difficult question because I would like the Timorese to answer to that question themselves. I think there is a need for them to build a consensus on what are the sectors that should be the foundations for their own sustainable development. We are advising them in the sense that they should have some kind of a national conference or a national meeting on development priorities and discuss what are the priorities: is it tourism, is it agriculture and what kind of agriculture? Is it coffee within agriculture or is it other types of agricultural produce? Is it light industries? They have to decide.

PISIK: But what would the answer--

ANGELO: Is it in the fisheries? I don't want to provide the answer because I believe this is something that they have to decide and define by themselves in the understanding that whatever they decide it will require a serious investment in terms of human resources. They have to prepare their population better, they have to train them for them to be able to modernize that economy and to have a modern state, to have a country that belongs to the 21st century.

FERREIRA: Taking account of the level of destruction of the judicial system to what extent is the UN and UNDP specifically involved in the efforts to support law and order, to establish courthouses and police stations, detention facilities and so on?

ANGELO: We have already organized in the area of justice two intensive courses for justice officials but we want to do more and we want to do that in close association with the UN administration. So what we have been doing with the UN administration is to define what should be a full-fledged programme of assistance to the development of the judiciary in East Timor. And we are now in the final stages of that discussion and we hope that very soon we will be starting the implementation of a programme that will put together the justice

system in East Timor. Besides that, as you know there is a civilian police presence through the UN administration. That presence is to keep law and order but is also to train the future police force of East Timor. We have not been involved in that area in the training of the police force but I know that there are plans to have a police academy and to start preparing the police officers of the new country very soon.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Angelo, it looks as if you have a long job ahead of you. That's all the time we have on this programme. Thank you for being with us on this edition of **World Chronicle**.

Our guest has been J. Victor Angelo, Special Envoy to East Timor of UNDP, the United Nations Development Programme. He was interviewed by Betsy Pisik of *The Washington Times* and Argemiro Ferreira of *Tribuna da Imprensa*.

I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of World Chronicle.

ANNOUNCER: Transcripts of the programme may be obtained free of charge by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to **World Chronicle**, United Nations, Room S-827L, New York, N.Y., 10017.

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